WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of manufacturing a metal-covered, molded plastic component, comprising:

providing a film sheet having a decorative layer of metal, the film sheet being selected from the group consisting of polyester, polyurethane and polycarbonate;

forming the film sheet to obtain a preform;

placing the preform in a mold cavity of an injection mold having a shape defining the desired plastic component;

injecting a thermoplastic elastomer into the mold cavity of the injection mold to generate a structural carrier for the preform, the generation of the structural carrier creating sufficient pressure and heat to bond the structural carrier to a bottom surface of the preform to form the metal-covered molded plastic component; and

preventing the preform from moving in the mold cavity during the step of injecting.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the thermoplastic elastomer is selected from the group consisting essentially of a thermoplastic polyolefin, thermoplastic urethane, polyester, polycarbonate; acrylonitrile/ butadiene/styrene, polypropylene, a mixture of acrylonitrile/butadiene/styrene and polycarbonate, and mixtures thereof.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of injecting a thermoplastic elastomer into the mold cavity occurs at a temperature of approximately 420°F and at a pressure of 50 psi to 15,000 psi.

4. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of cutting the preform prior to the step of placing.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the structural carrier has a flexural modulus in the range of 15,000 to 400,000 psi.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the structural carrier has a durometer in the range of 15 Shore D to 100 Shore D.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the film sheet has a total thickness of approximately 0.2 mils.

8. A method of manufacturing a metal-covered, molded laminate automotive component, comprising:

inserting a film sheet having a decorative layer of metal into a forming station to form the film sheet into a predetermined automotive component shape to create a formed film sheet having top and bottom surfaces, the film sheet being selected from the group consisting of polyester, polyurethane and polycarbonate;

placing the formed film sheet in a mold cavity of an injection mold having a shape defining the automotive component;

injecting a thermoplastic elastomer into the mold cavity of the injection mold, such that the thermoplastic elastomer is in mating contact with the bottom surface of the formed film sheet, to generate a structural carrier for the formed film sheet, the generation of the structural carrier creating sufficient pressure and heat to bond the structural carrier to the bottom surface of the formed film sheet to form the metal-covered, molded laminate automotive component; and

preventing the preform from moving in the mold cavity during the step of injecting.

9. A method of manufacturing a metal-covered, molded plastic component, comprising:

providing a film sheet having a decorative layer of metal, the film sheet being selected from the group consisting of polyester, polyurethane and polycarbonate;

forming the film sheet to obtain a preform;

placing the preform in a mold cavity of an injection mold having a shape defining the desired plastic component; and

injecting a thermoplastic elastomer into the mold cavity of the injection mold to generate a structural carrier for the preform, the generation of the structural carrier creating sufficient pressure and heat to bond the structural carrier to the bottom surface of the preform to form the molded laminate plastic component wherein the decorative layer of metal is coated with polyvinylidine fluoride and a clear plastic layer.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the polyvinylidine fluoride comprises more than 50% of the total thickness of the film sheet.

11. The method of claim 9, wherein the thermoplastic elastomer is selected from the group consisting of a thermoplastic polyolefin, thermoplastic urethane, polyester, polycarbonate, acrylonitrile/ butadiene/styrene, polypropylene, a mixture of acrylonitrile/butadiene/styrene and polycarbonate, and mixtures thereof.

12. The method of claim 9, wherein the step of injecting a thermoplastic elastomer into the mold cavity occurs at a temperature of 420°F and at a pressure of 50 psi to 15,000 psi.

13. The method of claim 9, further comprising the step of cutting the preform prior to the step of placing.

14. The method of claim 9, wherein the structural carrier has a flexural modulus in the range of 15,000 to 400,000 psi.

15. The method of claim 9, wherein the structural carrier has a durometer in the range of 15 Shore D to 100 Shore D.

16. The method of claim 9, wherein the film sheet has a total thickness of approximately 0.2 mils.

17. A method of manufacturing a metal-covered, molded laminate automotive component, comprising:

inserting a film sheet having a decorative layer of metal into a forming station to form the film sheet into a predetermined automotive component shape to create a formed film sheet having top and bottom surfaces, the film sheet being selected from the group consisting of polyester, polyurethane and polycarbonate;

placing the formed film sheet in a mold cavity of an injection mold having a shape defining the automotive component;

injecting a thermoplastic elastomer into the mold cavity of the injection mold, such that the thermoplastic elastomer is in mating contact with a bottom surface of the formed film sheet, to generate a structural carrier for the formed film sheet, the generation of the structural carrier creating sufficient pressure and heat to bond the structural carrier to the bottom surface of the formed film sheet to form the molded laminate automotive component wherein the decorative layer of metal is coated with a layer of polyvinylidine fluoride and a clear plastic layer.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein the polyvinylidine fluoride comprises more than 50% of the total thickness of the film sheet.

19. A metal-covered component manufactured by the method of claim 1, claim 8, claim 9 or claim 17.